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Momo Certainly Does Get Around

By Sandy Smith
Newsday Special Correspondent

Chicago—Crime syndicate boss Salvatore (Momo) Giancana, the crime boss of the Midwest, has not always led a life of crime, it was revealed yesterday. Once, he played a more glamorous role: he was a middle-aged spy for the CIA.

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) officials in Washington are not talking about their offbeat ex-employee, but probers said the CIA contacted Giancana after the 1959 Castro rebellion in an attempt to get information from Cuba through him. For several months in 1959 and 1960, it was disclosed, Giancana promised the CIA that he could obtain reports from Cuban hoods who operated gambling casinos in Cuba before the revt.

This embarrassing intelligence came out in

the course of an FBI investigation of Giancana's dealings with "the Commission," a

cozy group of arbitrators described as the national council of organized crime, the Cosa Nostra's supreme court. Giancana, who has ruled the Chicago crime syndicate for seven years with the ferocity worthy of a man whose boyhood idol was Al Capone, is one of 12 big-city gang chiefs who sit on the commission to settle disputes over rackets territory and other parochial underworld squabbles.

The Justice Department says that Giancana's contacts never came through with the promised intelligence, and government prosecutors believe that Giancana pretended to work with the CIA for his own very personal reasons. Perhaps, they say, Giancana hoped that a show of cooperation with a government agency might halt FBI surveillances.

If that was the dapper 53-year-old gangster's plan, it was wasted effort on his part, and two months ago he asked the United States District Court here to call off the FBI, who he said invaded his privacy. After a few days of heady triumph when Federal Judge Richard B. Austin ordered the FBI watch restricted, the sheriff's men took over the tail until Austin's restraining order was stayed pending appeal.

The late gangster Charles (Lucky) Luciano also tried his luck as an operative. He was pardoned in New York in January, 1946, by then Gov. Thomas E. Dewey, who said Luciano had cooperated with the armed forces during the war in obtaining information. The Army, Navy and Office of Strategic Service (OSS) issued denials, and Dewey did, too, before Luciano was deported to Italy.



Salvatore (Momo) Giancana
A CIA Cloak and Dagger Man?